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184 the bride into the house of the bridegroom, and when ap-  
 585 propriate offerings have been made to the spirits and the rela-  
 tives of both families have celebrated sufficiently, the wedding  
 is over. Before giving their final consent, however, the bride's  
 [583] parents demand 'ngön sin sot,' the money which is required for  
 the wedding ceremony, from the bridegroom in accordance with  
 their position and their expenses, but at least 150 ticals ...,  
 p. [426] but if the groom should be unable to raise such a sum at the  
 moment, the bride's parents give it to him on credit."

583 This extending of credit for the purchase price is con-  
 426 firmed by the other two authors. Lajonquière (3), for instance,

## 3. II, p. 316.

writes in this connection: "If a young man cannot raise the  
 sum required for a splendid wedding, he is still able to ask for  
 the hand of even a rich girl. The family of the latter then  
 defrays all the costs of the celebration. In turn the young  
 couple is obligated to serve for one or several years in the  
 house of the girl's parents or to buy themselves free by paying  
 a certain sum." These statements were likewise borrowed by  
 [114] Abadie (1) /see footnote 1 above/ almost verbatim.

595 It may also happen, however, that a man does not choose  
 a young and pretty girl as his secondary wife, but a widow with  
 many children, in order to acquire a work force. The chief  
 wife, of course, benefits most from this in every respect, since  
 all this work force is directly under her. Such marriages are  
 therefore viewed happily and actually favored by the chief wife.

114 Lajonquière's statements (3) /see footnote 3 above/ which  
 184 we find repeated verbatim in Abadie (4) and according to  
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## 4. Page 167.

which polygamy is permitted among the Meau, but the Meau  
 takes a second wife only if the first one has remained sterile,

*Miao AES*

/240/ *etc.* /

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596 Through the labor performed on the land, it thereby passes into the possession of the head of the large ~~extended~~ family. Every large family cultivates its land collectively; there is no distribution of the land among the individual small families of the family union. Just as a large family often cultivates several fields at the same time, it also frequently happens that several large families jointly cultivate only one large field. It depends on the number of individuals in a large family. If several large families, each with few members, jointly cultivate the soil, the land is divided into corresponding sections, each of which is tilled by one large family. Since the fields remain productive for only a short time, a later redistribution is unnecessary.

423 Wild fruits, plants, or trees belong to the person who collects or uses them.

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[423]  
[596] Among the Meau only the house itself belongs to the head of the large family, whereas the furnishings are the joint property of all the occupants. This is true of the kitchen equipment, the domestic animals, saddles, bridles, and the like. On the other hand, clothing, weapons, and personal ornaments are the property of the individuals, who usually obtained these objects as gifts, [431] for example, from the head of the large family or the partner of a love affair, and, in the case of children, from their parents, or they made them themselves, such as weapons, traps, and so forth. Similarly, the equipment that the wife has brought into the marriage, such as clothing and the dowry in general, remains her personal property.

The Meau have no special marks of ownership; hence such distinguishing marks are used neither on personal property nor on the domestic animals of the large family.

● 426 The legal conditions are definite for every form of loan, whether it is money, that is, silver, or field produce, animals, etc. that is involved. Loans are granted and handed over in the presence of three witnesses. No interest has to be paid for a loan up to one year; for a longer period, regardless of whether it is paid back in two years or in ten, interest has to be paid once, amounting to one-third of the value received. For example, if a person has borrowed 21 baskets of rice, 28 baskets are

Mico AES

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- 426 paid back, including the interest. Natural products can take the place of money or silver. If /241/ the creditor and debtor cannot agree on the evaluation of the goods, the creditor will ask the debtor to sell his wares elsewhere for silver and to pay him back with it.

If the debtor is not in a position to repay the loan, he must reimburse the creditor in another way, for example, by laying out a field large enough so that the harvest will cover the sum of the loan. Therefore, if a Meau has borrowed the 21 baskets of rice mentioned, he lays out a field that will yield 28 baskets.

- 426 If the debtor cannot satisfy the creditor in this way, a sale takes place, not of the debtor himself or his wives or his adult children, but of those children who have not yet reached maturity.
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- 858 In this case, the debtor is obligated to give an appropriate number of these children to the creditor in lieu of payment. The creditor is now free to decide whether he wants to bring up the children as unfree persons, to adopt them, or to resell them to his tribesmen or to migratory traders. If children have to be turned over to a creditor, their value is fixed at 70 pieces of silver for a boy and 50 pieces for a girl.
- [567]
- [734]
- [597]
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- 426 Interest is demanded only from members of other sibs and is paid to such persons. Within the sib the granting of loans to sib members who need help as a result of crop failure, cattle deaths, or lightning is regarded as a sib duty.
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- 426 The members of a large /extended/ family are not responsible for the debts of the head of the large family during his lifetime. If the head should die before repaying his debt, however, the entire large family is jointly responsible for the amount of the debt. In like manner, the head of a large family is not responsible for the debts incurred by a member of his family without his knowledge. This is not affected by the death of the debtor. On the other hand, the head is responsible for debts incurred by a member of the large family with the knowledge and approval of the head, even if the debtor should die before the debt is repaid.
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AKha A04  
Miao AE5

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In case of malicious nonpayment, which in practice almost never occurs, the creditor turns to the village chief, who will make use of his powers. If even his efforts are unsuccessful, the creditor has the right to kill the debtor.

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Limitation of debts is unknown, but repayment in installments is customary. If a Meau debtor lives in a village other than the one where the creditor lives or moves to a different village, a sort of promissory note is made out. It consists of a piece of wood into which a notch is cut for the value of each ten pieces of silver. Thereupon the stick is split lengthwise in such a way that the halved notches remain on each of the sides of the stick. The creditor keeps one half of the stick; the debtor takes the other half with him. This practical custom seems to be very widespread among the Meau and not limited to Thailand. In any case Dhuraratsadorn (1) reports in similar fashion on the

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# 1. Page 172.

Meau in Tonkin.

If a creditor wants repayment from the debtor, he need not seek him out himself, but can ask someone else to demand the amount for him. He then gives the half of the stick to the messenger as identification. Upon presentation, the debtor is obliged to pay the messenger, identified by the half of the stick, the amount shown on the stick, beginning at the date agreed upon, provided that this half agrees with the one that remained with the debtor. On the other hand, if only partial payment is made, the old debt-stick is destroyed and a new one prepared showing the residual amount, and this is handled in the same way as the first. The messenger is then given a half of the stick to take back.

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The situation regarding property among the Akha differs considerably from that among the Meau. Uncultivated land belongs to no one; it is considered as unrestricted, as are hunting and fishing. Accordingly, the land may be taken into possession by any tribesman without further inquiry by merely beginning to clear and cultivate it. It is left entirely up to him to choose the land and the extent of the land. Since, however, land is usually

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576 The extreme politeness of the Meau is also shown in collecting a debt. The Meau proceeds on the assumption that this demand for payment will not be a pleasant experience for the debtor, and /468/ the unpleasantness must be presented to him in the most amiable manner possible. The creditor announces his visit several months in advance. On the day let the debtor prepares a feast in which the creditor participates without saying a word about the debt. The Meau assume that this is superfluous, for the debtor knows only too well why the creditor has come. Shortly before the guest departs, the debt is paid without any request.

576 The same line of thought is the basis for the procedure of a visit if the visitor would like to make a request. Everything possible is discussed first, except the purpose of the call. The reason for the visit is mentioned quite casually only in connection with the repeatedly announced departure.

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576 As "please," the Meau use the word tău or tău mên yē, which literally means "please a little"; "thank you" is tō tse, but one usually says tō tse hō lō, with the meaning of "thank you very kindly!" As affirmation, the Meau use yā; as negation, kū tsī ōa. They also have expressions for a number of emotions: esteem = lău sī yūn; veneration = lău sī lū lē; contempt = hū yū; fear, horror = hūi; hatred = a drawn-out ō; amazement = ōū.

156 The Meau vary greatly in their mental abilities. One finds average persons among them, but in addition personalities with pronounced qualities of leadership, who stand out because of a talent for organization, which is peculiar to the Meau in general to a high degree, as well as because of heightened rhetorical gifts and an innate authority which everywhere is made up of the immeasurable, imponderable qualities of a natural leader. Such a born leader, for example, was the Meau chief, Tsin Tsai, whose hospitality we enjoyed for some  
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156 time and with whom I undertook hunting expeditions. It is  
622 interesting how his personality impressed even an unprejudiced  
123 European observer. For this reason I shall reproduce the pertinent section from my wife's journal: